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## CHAPTER IX.

"Who Could Have Foreseen It?"

A DREADFUL thing had happened to us. Who could have foreseen it? I cannot foresee any end to our troubles. It may be that we are condemned to spend our whole lives in this strange, inaccessible place. I am still so confused that I can hardly think clearly of the facts of the present or of the chances of the future. To my astounded senses the one seems most terrible and the other as black as night.

When I finished my last letter I stated that we were within seven miles from an enormous line of ruddy cliffs which encircled, beyond all doubt, the plateau of which Professor Challenger spoke. Their height, as we approached them, seemed to me in some places to be greater than he had stated, running up in parts to at least a thousand feet, and they were curiously striated in a manner which, I believe, characteristic of basaltic upheavals. Something of the sort is to be seen in Salisbury crags, at Edinburgh. The summit showed every sign of a luxuriant vegetation, with bushes near the edge and farther back many high trees. There was no indication of any life that we could see.

That night we pitched our camp immediately under the cliff—a most wild and desolate spot. The crags above us were not merely perpendicular, but curved outward at the top, so that ascent was out of the question.

In the morning, after a frugal breakfast of coffee and manioc—we had to be economical of our stores—we held a council of war as to the best method of ascending to the plateau above us.

Challenger presided with a solemnity as if he were the lord chief justice on the bench. Picturing himself seated upon a rock, his absurd boyish straw hat tilted on the back of his head, his supercilious eyes dominating us from under his drooping lids, his great black beard waving as he slowly defined our present situation and our future movements.

"I need not say," said our leader, "that on the occasion of my last visit I exhausted every means of climbing the cliff, and where I failed I do not think any one else is likely to succeed, for I am something of a mountaineer. I had none of the appliances of a rock climber with me, but I have taken the precaution to bring them now. With their aid I am positive I could climb that detached pinnacle to the summit. But so long as the main cliff overhangs it is vain to attempt ascending that. I was hurried upon my last visit by the approach of the rainy season and by the exhaustion of my supplies. These considerations limited my time, and I can only claim that I have surveyed about six miles of the cliff to the east of us, finding no possible way up. What, then, shall we now do?"

"There seems to be only one reasonable course," said Professor Summerlee. "If you have explored the east we should travel along the base of the cliff to the west and seek for a practicable point for our ascent."

"That's it," said Lord John. "The odds are that this plateau is of great size, and we shall travel round it until we either find an easy way up it or come back to the point from which we started."

The ground at the foot of the cliff was rocky and broken, so that the going was slow and difficult. Suddenly we came, however, upon something which cheered our hearts. It was the site of an old encampment, with several empty Chicago meat tins, a bottle labeled "Brandy," a broken tin opener and a quantity of other travelers' debris. A crumpled, disintegrated newspaper revealed itself as the Chicago Democrat, though the date had been obliterated.

"Not mine," said Challenger. "It must be Maple White's."



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just before retiring and it will have made the evening brighter. Rock Island Brewing Co.

Lord John had been gazing curiously at a great tree fern which overshadowed the encampment. "I say, look at this," said he. "I believe it is meant for a signpost."



We Held a Council of War.

A slip of hardwood had been nailed to the tree in such a way as to point to the westward.

"Most certainly a signpost," said Challenger. "What else? Finding himself upon a dangerous errand, our pioneer has left this sign so that any party which follows him may know the way he has taken. Perhaps we shall come upon some other indications as we proceed."

We did indeed, but they were of a terrible and most unexpected nature. Immediately beneath the cliff there grew a considerable patch of high bamboo, like that which we had traversed in our journey. Many of these stems were twenty feet high, with sharp, strong tops, so that even as they stood they made formidable spears. We were passing along the edge of this cover when my eye was caught by the gleam of something white within it. Thrusting in my head between the stems, I found myself gazing at a fleshless skull. The whole skeleton was there, but the skull had detached itself and lay some feet nearer to the open.

With a few blows from the machetes of our Indians we cleared the spot and were able to study the details of this old tragedy. Only a few shreds of clothes could still be distinguished, but there were the remains of boots upon the bony feet, and it was very clear that the dead man was a European. A gold watch and a chain, which held a stylographic pen, lay among the bones. There was also a silver cigarette case, with "J. C. from A. E. S." upon the lid. The state of the metal seemed to show that the catastrophe had occurred no great time before.

"Who can he be?" asked Lord John. "Poor devil, every bone in his body seems to be broken."

"And the bamboo grows through his smashed ribs," said Summerlee. "It is a fast growing plant, but it is surely inconceivable that this body could have been here while the canes grew to be twenty feet in length."

"As to the man's identity," said Professor Challenger, "I have no doubt whatever upon that point. As I made my way up the river before I reached you at the fazenda I instituted very particular inquiries about Maple White. At Para they knew nothing. Fortunately, I had a definite clue, for there was a particular picture in his sketch book which showed him taking lunch with a certain ecclesiastic at Rosario. This priest I was able to find, and though he proved a very argumentative fellow, who took it absurdly amiss that I should point out to him the corrosive effect which modern science must have upon his beliefs, he none the less gave me some positive information. Maple White passed Rosario four years ago, or two years before I saw his dead body. He was not alone at the time, but there was a friend, an American named James Colver, who remained in the boat and did not meet this ecclesiastic. I think, therefore, that there can be no doubt that we are now looking upon the remains of this James Colver."

"Nor," said Lord John, "is there much doubt as to how he met his death. He has fallen or been chucked from the top and so been impaled. How else could he come by his broken bones and how could he have been stuck through by these canes with their points so high above our heads?"

We moved off in silence and continued to coast round the line of cliffs, which were as even and unbroken as some of those monstrous Antarctic ice-fields which I have seen depicted as stretching from horizon to horizon and towering high above the mastheads of the exploring vessel.

In five miles we saw no rift or break. And then suddenly we perceived something which filled us with new hope. In a hollow of the rock, protected from rain, there was drawn a rough arrow in chalk, pointing still to the westward.

"Maple White again," said Professor Challenger. "He had some presentiment that worthy footsteps would follow close behind him."

"He had chalk, then?"

"A box of colored chalks was among the effects I found in his knapsack. I remember that the white one was worn to a stump."

"That is certainly good evidence," said Summerlee. "We can only accept his guidance and follow on to the westward."

We had proceeded some five more miles when again we saw a white arrow upon the rocks. It was at a point where the face of the cliff was for the first time split into a narrow cleft. Inside the cleft was a second guidance mark, which pointed right up it with the tip somewhat elevated, as if the spot indicated were above the level of the ground.

It was a solemn place, for the walls were so gigantic and the slit of blue sky so narrow and so obscured by a double fringe of verdure that only a dim and shadowy light penetrated to the bottom. We had had no food for many hours and were very weary with the stony and irregular journey, but our nerves were too strung to allow us to halt. We ordered the camp to be pitched, however, and, leaving the Indians to arrange it, we four, with the two half breeds, proceeded up the narrow gorge.

It was not over forty feet across at the mouth, but it rapidly closed until it ended in an acute angle, too straight and smooth for an ascent. Certainly it was not this which our pioneer had attempted to indicate. We made our way back—the whole gorge was not more than a quarter of a mile deep—and then suddenly the quick eyes of Lord John fell upon what we were seeking. High up above our heads amid the dark shadows there was one circle of deeper gloom. Surely it could only be the opening of a cave.

The base of the cliff was heaped with loose stones at the spot, and it was not difficult to clamber up. When we reached it all doubt was removed. Not only was it an opening into the rock, but on the side of it there was marked once again the sign of the arrow.

Here was the point and this was the means by which Maple White and his ill-fated comrade had made their ascent.

We were too excited to return to the camp, but must make our first exploration at once. Lord John had an electric torch in his knapsack, and this had to serve us as light. He advanced, throwing his little clear circle of yellow radiance before him, while in single file we followed at his heels.

The cave had evidently been water worn, the sides being smooth and the floor covered with rounded stones. It was of such a size that a single man could just fit through by stooping. For fifty yards it ran almost straight into the rock, and then it ascended at an angle of forty-five degrees. Presently this incline became even steeper, and we found ourselves climbing upon hands and knees among loose rubble which slid from beneath us. Suddenly an exclamation broke from Lord Roxton.

"It's blocked!" said he. Clustering behind him, we saw in the yellow field of light a wall of broken basalt which extended to the ceiling. "The roof has fallen in!"

In vain we dragged out some of the pieces. The only effect was that the larger ones became detached and threatened to roll down the gradient and crush us. It was evident that the obstacle was far beyond any efforts



"It's blocked!" said he. "The roof has fallen in."

which we could make to remove it. The road by which Maple White had ascended was no longer available.

Too much cast down to speak, we stumbled down the dark tunnel and made our way back to the camp.

One incident occurred, however, before we left the gorge, which is of importance in view of what came afterward.

We had gathered in a little group at the bottom of the chasm, some forty feet beneath the mouth of the cave, when a huge rock rolled suddenly downward and shot past us with tremendous force. It was the narrowest escape for one or all of us. We could not ourselves see whence the rock had come, but our half breed servants, who were still at the opening of the cave, said that it had flown past them and must therefore have fallen from the summit. Looking upward, we could see no sign of movement above us, and the green jungle which topped

## By Midnight

Tuesday, August 15th

Up to midnight August 15, a period of 7½ months, we sold and delivered more United States Automobile Tires than we sold during the entire twelve months of 1915—last year.

By August 16, we had passed, by several thousand casings, the sales total for 1915,—itself a year of steady sales increases.

And day by day these phenomenal 1916 increases are heaping up.

Besides—there were still left of this year 115 selling days—4½ months.

This almost unbelievable feat of equalling, in 7½ months, the sales record of last year, proves the unequalled merit and actual economy of

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ber, A. D. 1916, at the hour of 9 o'clock, a. m., or as soon thereafter as the business of the court will permit.

All persons desiring may file objections in said court before said day, and may appear on the hearing and make their defense.

Dated Rock Island, Ill., Aug. 29, 1916.

WILLIAM A. MITCHELL, Officer appointed to make the assessment.

JOHN K. SCOTT, City Attorney.

## Special Assessment Notice.

Gen. No. 411.

Notice is hereby given to all persons interested, that the city council of Rock Island, Ill., having ordered the paving with brick blocks of Forty-second street from Seventh avenue to Railroad avenue; and Railroad avenue from Forty-second to Forty-third streets, and the ordinance for the same being on file in the office of the city clerk of said city, and said city having applied to the county court of Rock Island, Ill., for an assessment of the cost of said improvement according to benefits, said assessment being payable in nine installments, each bearing interest at the rate of five per cent, per annum, and an assessment therefore having been made and returned to said court, the final hearing thereon will be had on the 15th day of September, A. D. 1916, at the hour of 9 o'clock, a. m., or as soon thereafter as the business of the court will permit.

All persons desiring may file objections in said court, before said day, and may appear on the hearing and make their defense.

Dated Rock Island, Ill., Aug. 29, 1916.

WILLIAM A. CORCORAN, Officer appointed to make the assessment.

JOHN K. SCOTT, City Attorney.

## Special Taxation Notice.

Gen. No. 405.

Notice is hereby given to all persons interested, that the city council of Rock Island, Ill., having ordered the paving with brick blocks of Forty-first street from Railroad avenue to the Flack and Bean Industrial boundary line, excepting its intersections with Seventh and Eighth avenues, also Railroad avenue from Forty-first to Forty-second streets, and the ordinance for the same being on file in the office of the city clerk of said city, and said city having applied to the county court of Rock Island county, Illinois, for an assessment of the cost of said improvement according to the frontage of the property assessed along the line of the improvement, said assessment being payable in nine installments, each bearing interest at the rate of five per cent, per annum, and an assessment therefore having been made and returned to said court, the final hearing thereon will be had on the 15th day of September, A. D. 1916, at the hour of 9 o'clock, a. m., or as soon thereafter as the business of the court will permit.

All persons desiring may file objections in said court, before said day, and may appear on the hearing and make their defense.

Dated Rock Island, Ill., Aug. 29, 1916.

S. J. SELINE, Officer appointed to make the assessment.

JOHN K. SCOTT, City Attorney.

## DUTCH ARMY MAN CLAIMS SUB IDEA

The Hague, Netherlands.—A retired Dutch army officer claims the fatherhood of the transatlantic submarine service recently inaugurated by the "Deutschland." Jonkheer J. Sandberg, formerly of the Netherlands East Indian Army, says that more than a year ago he addressed a letter to Admiral Von Tirpitz through the Ger-

man consul-general at The Hague, setting forth the idea of breaking the British blockade by this means and recommending its execution. A copy of the letter was a few days later brought to the notice of Herr Ballin, the managing director of the Hamburg-America line. The latter was much taken with the plan, and consulted with the competent authorities regarding its execution.

All the news all the time—The Argus.

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Notice of Color for Ballots

Announcement is hereby made that the colors for the Primary

Ballots to be used by the respective parties at a Primary Election to

be held on the 13th day of September, A. D. 1916, in the county of

Rock Island and state of Illinois, will be as follows: . . . . .

Republican Party	White
Democratic Party	Salmon
Progressive Party	Green
for Social Justice	
Socialist Party	Blue

Dated the 29th day of August, A. D. 1916.

HENRY B. HUBBARD, County Clerk.